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The second European Conference of Social Anthropologists on the theme of 'Social Anthropology in a Changing World' was held from 28–31 August, 1992 at Charles University in Prague. Regardless the general topic directing discussions on the world changes, the intellectual excitement of the hundreds of participants was concentrated rather on global anthropological theories, the role of scientists and science and a redefinition of some of the basic categories of social anthropology.

An emphasis of the changes in society was put in the workshop 'World View, Power and Economy in the Post-Communist Transition' with B. Müller (Berlin) as convener. The main conclusion from the discussions on the presented nine papers involves the paradox that in the conditions of total macro-political, economic and social change there is a strong persistence of individual patterns of behaviour in the first years of transformation from socialism to democracy. This idea was illustrated by rich empirical material from different countries of East-central Europe.

A bridge between the countries of East-central and other European societies was made by Christian Giordano (Fribourg) who presented a paper on the rationality of informal economy as a result of the deep gulf between state and society on the case of Poland. Concretizing a hypothesis with an interpretation going back to M. Weber's idea that an effective system of power can exist when there is a legitimacy or a belief for legitimacy of the existing power, he argues that under socialism there was no belief on the side of the citizens that the legal power was legitimate. In that way the gulf was transformed to the relation legitimacy of cultural norms and legality of legal norms. In this respect the informal economy in Poland followed the logic of cultural norms in opposition to legal norms. This proved that informal economy was a strategy of resistance under socialism.

Other individual strategy during the same period of time in the case of Czechoslovakia was discussed by Josef Kandert (Prague). Dealing with the

privacy of the family in the last 40 years he analyzed its superiority to the goals and interests of the state. The double type of behaviour and values recognition — one within the framework of the family and a second one — for the public led to the perception of the family as a refuge from the totalitarian socialist ideological pressure. Despite the freedom proclaimed by the state, the family continues to have the same role in the transition period.

Another aspect of the influence of the transformation of Czech society on people in their daily life was presented by H. Haukanes (Norway). On the basis of an analyses of the macro-social events' perception the values and views of the inhabitants of the local community of Lipina were demonstrated to serve as a buffer zone which supports individuals in dealing with the new turbulent world.

Quite different was the theses of A. Kaleta (Toruń) and K. Szafraniec (Toruń) who analyzed a definite generational group (20–25 years old) of villagers in the 1980s in Poland. This was a period characterized by a disorganized country space which formed the basis of a low level of identity of the rural youth with local community and cultural traditions as a whole.

A comparative analyses of a Hungarian village development under socialism and in the transition period was presented by C. Hann (Cambridge). The conclusion of the author was that in spite of the new economic and political contexts, the organizational style of coop management in the village has not changed or if there were some changes they were rather cosmetic than substantial. As the villagers are preoccupied with urgent production issues, they are not too much concerned about the transformations which present the basis for continuity in political behaviour in the time of transition.

The issue of continuity and change was discussed by D. Kostova (Sofia), whose main theses was that the new identity of the countries of East-central Europe is being reconstructed as a consequence of the historical circumstances and the very high level of influence of world internationalization. The explanation of the latter phenomena is based on the increasing unification of world development and the intention of people to choose the known, experienced way of development. In that way the identity damaged under socialism is turned, after the transition, into social uniformity.

The attitudes of East Germans to market economy and the sources for their disappointment were analyzed by B. Müller (Berlin). A very important source was the collapse between the expectations for society improvement and reality followed by the lost of both job and certainty and the feeling of job necessity for the society.

In the presentation of C. Lutard (Paris) the notion of state on the basis of ethnicity and citizenship was compared for Yugoslavia in the present day and under socialism. The author defended the concept that nowadays

nationalism represents a negative factor of division and denial, which is leading to a decline in the process of democratization of Yugoslav society.

The workshop was a good opportunity for social researchers to meet and discuss from various standpoints and different cultural contexts the present changes in East-central Europe. The various approaches allowed to analyze the linkages between past and present, to rethink and reevaluate the similarities and differences in perceiving and structuring societies in transition.